ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE GRADUATE ASSEMBLY
2016-2017

In accordance with the Handbook of Operating Procedures of The University of Texas at Austin, the Secretary submits the following report of the activities of the Graduate Assembly during the Regular Session 2016-2017. The report summarizes pages 3223 – 3230c of the Documents and Proceedings of the Graduate Assembly.

I. Membership of the Assembly

For the period covered by this report the faculty members were as follows:

Elected members with vote and their terms of office, serving 2016-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Assembly Member</th>
<th>Graduate Studies Committee</th>
<th>Term of Office</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hal Alper, Chair</td>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>2015-2018(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan Cole</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2016-2019(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Mackert (Fall)</td>
<td>Radio Television Film</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Fuller-Seeley* (Spring)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kavita Radhakrishnan</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>2016-2019(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Weaver</td>
<td>LBJ Public Affairs</td>
<td>2016-2019(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciaran Trace</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo Worthy</td>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</td>
<td>2016-2019(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andreas Matouschek</td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>2016-2019(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonsuck Kim</td>
<td>Geosciences</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Murray</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
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</table>

ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

James Cox, Chair          | English                      | 2014-2017(1)   |
John Deigh                | Law                          | 2016-2019(2)   |
Elizabeth Gershoff        | Human Dev & Family Sci.      | 2016-2019(1)   |
Kristen Brustad           | Middle Eastern Studies       | 2015-2018(1)   |
Darla Castelli           | Kinesiology & Health Ed.     | 2015-2018(1)   |
Tatjana Lichsenstein (Fall) | History                    | 2015-2018(1)   |
Alison Frazier* (Spring)  |                             |                |

* Serving out the term of a member who resigned or is on leave.

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Administrative Committee (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Pollack</td>
<td>Neuroscience</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Thompson</td>
<td>American Studies</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Mueller (Fall)</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Wilson* (Spring)</td>
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</tbody>
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ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diane Schallert, Chair</td>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hasenbein</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>2016-2019(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Alu</td>
<td>Electrical &amp; Computer Eng.</td>
<td>2016-2019(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Chen (Spring)</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2016-2019(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kui Ren* (Fall)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria Juenger</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>2016-2019(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Rascati</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Harrison</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt Balhoff</td>
<td>Petroleum &amp; Geosystems Eng.</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raji Srinivasan</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>2014-2017(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Strong</td>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>2015-2018(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Serving out the term of a member who resigned or is on leave.

No Committee Assignment

Prabhudev Konana, Chair of the Graduate Assembly
Charlotte Canning, Secretary of the Graduate Assembly

Elected Student Members, with Vote

ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Nikhil Sharma | Operations Research & Industrial Engineering

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Wills Brown | Educational Administration

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT COMMITTEE

Kareem Mostafa | Civil Engineering

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Ex-Officio Member, with Vote

Jody Jensen  
Chair, Faculty Council

Ex-Officio Members, without Vote

Greg Fenves  
President

Marvin Hackercr  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, ad interim

Maurie McInnis  
Executive Vice President and Provost

Dan Jaffe  
Vice President for Research

Jay Hartzell  
Dean, Red McCombs School of Business

Jay Bernhardt  
Dean, College of Communication

Manuel J. Justiz  
Dean, College of Education

Sharon Wood  
Dean, College of Engineering

Doug Dempster  
Dean, College of Fine Arts

Randy Diehl  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Linda Hicke  
Dean, College of Natural Sciences

Lynn Crisman  
Dean, College of Pharmacy

Elizabeth Danze  
Dean, School of Architecture, ad interim

Luis Zayas  
Dean, School of Social Work

Alexa Stuifbergen  
Dean, School of Nursing

Angela Evans  
Dean, LBJ School of Public Affairs

Ward Farnsworth  
Dean, School of Law

Andrew Dillon  
Dean, School of Information

II. Organization of the Assembly

Elected Officers 2016-2017

Chair: Prabhudev Konana, Information, Risk, and Operations Mgt.
Chair-Elect: Hal Alper, Chemical Engineering
Secretary: Charlotte Canning, Theatre and Dance (served one year, 2016-17)

Meeting Dates:  
September 21, 2016  
November 9, 2016  
February 1, 2017  
March 22, 2017  
April 26, 2017

III. Proceedings of the Graduate Assembly

Major Legislation
No major legislation was passed by the Assembly academic year 2016-2017.
Minor Legislation

- The proposal to update the degree title for the master's degree program in Nutritional Sciences from Master of Arts (MA) to Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences (MSNS) was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3224b, 9/21/16)

- The proposal to waive the requirement for the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) for applicants to the integrated master's program in Accounting was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3224b-3224d, 9/21/16)

- The proposal to add an Option III track to the existing Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences degree program was unanimously approved by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3226c, 11/9/16)

- The proposal to change the grading symbol for theses, reports, dissertation, treatise, and recital courses from “***” (asterisk) to CR/NC was unanimously approved by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3226d-3226e, 11/9/16)

- The proposal to waive the GRE/GMAT requirement for applicants to dual-degree programs to be administered by the Dell Medical School was unanimously approved by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3226g-3226h, 11/9/16)

- The proposal to create a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Mexican American and Latina/o Studies (MALS) was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3227c, 2/1/17)

- A report was shared regarding proposals to add room-share arrangements to the Option III programs in Finance and Marketing. These proposals are pending. (D&P 3227c.1, 2/1/17)

- The proposal to create an inter-institutional dual-degree arrangement leading to the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree from UT Austin Dell Medical School and the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from the UT Health Science Center at Houston (Austin Campus) was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3228e.1, 3/22/17)

- The proposal to create a graduate certificate in Latin American Architecture was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P, 3230a, 4/26/17)

- The proposal to create an Option III (self-funded) Master of Science in Information Technology and Management (MSITM) degree program was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3230a, 4/26/17)

- The proposal to create a dual-degree program in Medicine/Business Administration was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3230b, 4/26/17)
• The proposal to create a dual-degree program in Medicine/Educational Psychology was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3230b, 4/26/17)
• The proposal to waive the GRE/GMAT requirement for UT Austin undergraduate applicants to the Master of Science in Information Technology and Management (MSITM) degree program was approved unanimously by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3230c, 4/26/17)
• The proposal to allow the Department of Accounting to accept the GRE or GMAT for applicants to the integrated program in Accounting was approved unanimously and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3230c, 4/26/17)

IV. Report from the Graduate Dean, ad interim (Marvin L. Hackert)

Before beginning the official business of the meeting, Interim Dean Hackert asked that introductions take place. He provided an overview of the work and organizational structure of the Graduate Assembly.

Turning to his report, Interim Dean Hackert announced that the amount of student support has increased from $200,000 to $300,00 this past year. The Graduate School administered over $5 million in external fellowships. Previous fellowship programs and endowments such as the Harrington and Graduate Student Investment Initiative (GSII) coupled with external fellowships touched over 1,000 students and topped over $20 million for the first time. In terms of professional development, he reported that the Graduate School is striving to improve partnerships across campus. Writing fellowships have been introduced, and the Writing Center will be providing more training in writing. They will also help students identify and prepare for career paths outside of the academy. Next, Interim Dean Hackert reported that $89 million was approved for a graduate- and professional-student housing complex. The structure will be built on a block of land from Leona to Comal, which allows us to build two- to six-story units. This improves the cost, should reduce the ultimate cost in rent to students, and also provides the ability to build in amenities and common space so that the housing project will serve as place to develop a sense of community. The Graduate School’s goal is to bring the graduate-student housing online by June of 2019.

Interim Dean Hackert reported that the Graduate and International Admissions Center (GIAC), formerly a part of General Admissions that reported to David Laude, joined the Graduate School September 1, 2016. GIAC now reports to the dean of the Graduate School.

Interim Dean Hackert reported that the Graduate School is doing work to eliminate the signature page and improve the process for updating Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) lists. Signatures will no longer be required on the
signature page, and the Graduate School will manage the roster of the GSC. The Graduate School will request information twice a year in order to update and keep the roster current.

Interim Dean Hackert reported that Provost McInnis announced a search for a new Dean of the Graduate School and Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Dean Hackert will continue as interim dean until the permanent dean is assigned. He will then continue in his role as associate dean, providing help with the transition. One prominent change in the Graduate School will be the additional programs from the Dell Medical School.

Interim Dean Hackert reported that the UT System signed an agreement in June 2016 with CONACYT in Mexico. CONACYT and the UT System worked out plans to fund a five-year program that will support the training of graduate students and post docs. There will be some research funds and some exchange in faculty with short leaves between UT component institutions and institutions in Mexico.

Interim Dean Hackert introduced the 3-Minute Thesis and commented on the importance of writing to graduate students who are entering the job market. He reported that there will be a campus-wide competition for graduate students where competing students will be given three minutes and one slide to present the impact and importance of their work.

Interim Dean Hackert introduced Shannon Neuse from GIAC. Ms. Neuse presented a snapshot of admissions data for Summer 2016 and Fall 2016 applicants. Overall, we received 136 fewer total applications than last year. Applications were received from all 50 states and 138 countries. 24% of those who applied were admitted; 47% of those who were admitted subsequently enrolled. 57% of the applicants are male, 43% are female. Of those admitted, 51% are male and 49% are female. Of those who were admitted and enrolled, 51% were male and 49% were female. 50% of the students who applied are international, and 50% percent are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Looking at applications from the U.S., 15% are Texas residents and 35% are out of state. 70% of admitted students are U.S. citizens or permanent residents and 30% are international. Texas, California and New York are the top three on the applied, admit, and enrolled; Michigan, UC Berkeley, Stanford, and UCLA were listed as last year’s top four student choices.

In response to concerns voiced by Maria Juenger from Civil Engineering regarding politician Ken Paxton wanting to do away with in-state tuition, Interim Dean Hackert noted that the Graduate School uses about 500 waivers in one semester. He suggested that UT and liaisons with the legislature pay careful attention to this as the legislative session approaches.
Jo Worthy from Curriculum and Instruction asked if GIAC is gathering (D&P 3224a, 9/21/16) information from applicants regarding the issue of guns and open carry on campus, as this might be one reason students decide not to come to UT. Ms. Neuse noted that the data from her report had come from the National Student Clearinghouse, not a local resource. Jo Worthy then asked if applications had changed drastically in any way following the application of the open carry policy. Ms. Neuse responded that they had not.

John Deigh from the School of Law asked about deans referring to themselves as ‘leaders’ and ‘leadership,’ on program websites. John Deigh commented that this sounds rather corporate and suggested the question of whether this is the appropriate way to describe the principal executive officers of the various colleges in the tower be addressed at the Dean’s Council. Interim Dean Hackert responded that John Deigh was the first person to have raised that issue and confirmed that the websites will be reviewed in an effort to address these perceptions.

Chair Konana asked what the criteria for getting the new graduate-student housing will be. Interim Dean Hackert responded that details are still being worked out.

The members of the Graduate Assembly proposed a resolution to Pat Ellison, Director of Graduate and International Admissions Center and Assistant Dean of the Graduate School to offer gratitude for her nearly 40 years of service as well as condolences for the recent loss of her mother. (D&P 3224-3224c, 9/21/16)

Before beginning the official business of the November meeting, Dr. Konana welcomed special guest Provost Maurie McInnis. Dean Hackert then provided a brief introduction of Dr. McInnis, noting that her areas of academic expertise include Art History, American Studies, and Slave America. He further noted that he believes Provost McInnis is the first outside person hired to serve in that position at UT since William Lee Hays was hired to serve as Vice-President for Academic Affairs in 1977.

Provost McInnis greeted the Graduate Assembly. She commented on the positive reputation of the work of the Graduate Assembly and discussed the need for UT Austin to focus on graduate education at both the individual program level and strategically at the institutional level.

Provost McInnis acknowledged that graduate stipends are an issue. She reported that she recently swept $20 million in balances that will be repurposed and redirected to graduate student stipends. She has asked the deans to submit proposals to use these funds to support terminal degree programs at both the master’s and doctoral level. She noted that the more the deans are willing to contribute from their own funds to enhance student support, the more kindly their proposals are likely to be reviewed.
Additionally, she noted the need to consider the proper role of non-PhD programs – specifically, master’s education at UT Austin, stating that we must be mindful of the shifting demographics of students and what they want out of a University.

The majority of packages will likely be in the form of $5000 top-offs for four years. The goal will be to stretch these funds over four cohorts. In four years, we will look at the impact of higher stipends on recruitment so that we can begin making data-informed decisions and thinking strategically across all graduate programs.

Provost McInnis noted that an active search for a permanent Graduate Dean has been launched, and she described the expanded role that she envisions for this position that will carry the title “Graduate Dean and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.” She noted that the change in title was intended to signal very strongly that the Dean of the Graduate School would be a part of the group of deans and their leadership team and, also, a part of the leadership team in the Provost’s Office. She encouraged faculty to submit nominations for internal and external nominees.

Provost McInnis noted that a majority of our graduates are not going into academia and suggested that we need to think of career training and curriculum targeted to students who are interested in non-academic careers.

Prabhudev Konana noted that a major metric for evaluating PhD programs used to be graduates’ placement at specific institutions, and he asked the Provost if that metric is likely to change.

Provost McInnis noted that this is already changing nationally, that leading institutions are doing this already. She further noted that we will fall behind our peers if we don’t consider the needs of our students and graduates.

Prabhudev Konana then changed the topic of discussion to option III (self-funded) degree programs, noting that some programs have a better market potential for delivering this type of program than others and that this can lead to friction. He asked if the development of option III programs should be set by the market or held back due to these inequities.

Provost McInnis acknowledged the lack of balance and the need to have a strategic institutional conversation about the ideal balance of programs -- formula-funded, self-funded, master’s and doctoral. She noted that it’s logical that we and other universities are turning to these self-funded programs because so few new streams of revenue are available. She further noted that, unlike UT Austin, most universities don’t have to make such complicated boundaries and rules regarding state funds and faculty time.
We need to be thoughtful about how many of these programs we have, where we do them, and overall institutional funding so we don’t end up with the haves and the have-nots. She concluded by confirming that she doesn’t have a specific answer at this time, but wants to lead a campus conversation on this subject.

Having confirmed that there were no additional questions, Dr. Konana thanked Provost McInnis for addressing the Assembly; and Provost McInnis excused herself from the meeting.

Interim Dean Hackert introduced a new Graduate School brochure that summarizes the activities of the Graduate School and is available online. It should also be useful in the dean search.

Dean Hackert presented information on the ConTex agreement, noting that UT System signed agreement with Conacyt in Mexico in June to promote the collaboration and exchange of scholars. There are several parts of the agreement: graduate student support, post-doc, faculty research leave, and research grants. Conacyt will support students with stipend for four years -- $1100 per month for 12 months for 4 years -- and UT system will provide fifth year of support. In addition, the award will include in-state tuition and international insurance. There is more information on the Graduate School website. The Graduate School and GIAC are working to identify eligible enrolled students and applicants. Students have to be admitted to a UT graduate degree program before they apply for Conacyt funding from ConTex.

Dean Hackert discussed the 3-Minute Thesis competition that will take place on Feb 3. There have been recent announcements, and the Graduate School is offering related workshops. There are cash prizes and awards for students. In this competition, students get 3 minutes and one slide to present the importance of their work/research. The Graduate School will send the UT Austin winner to compete in a regional meeting.

Next, Dean Hackert announced that the Co-op awards banquet will be different this year. There will be one banquet this year, instead of two. Undergraduate and graduate awards will be given during one ceremony. John Dalton confirmed that the professional awards are currently open for nominations; student awards will open in late January.

Dean Hackert noted that hopefully the last paper request for updating the signature page has been sent out. In the future, this will probably be called the “GSC Program Administrative Roster.” The Graduate School is making progress on moving this and the GSC-update process to an online platform. They plan to have electronic processes in place next year.

Diane Schallert requested clarification of which signature page was being referred to – the one associated with administrative roles or the one associated 3231h
with a student’s dissertation. Dean Hackert confirmed that this discussion is related to the form that defines various administrative roles – the Graduate Adviser, GSC Chair, etc. – and it goes hand-in-hand with updating the GSC lists, but that these are two different programming projects.

Wonsook Kim asked if the increase in stipends would be initiated in the next academic year or how soon, noting its importance for recruiting. Dean Hackert responded that proposals are being developed and submitted by the deans. Therefore, decisions about allocations will happen after Dec 1.

Jim Cox requested clarification of the meaning of a $5000 top-off over four years. Dean Hackert confirmed that the intent was for a bump of $5000 per year but noted that details are not yet set and could vary by college. (D&P 3226a-3226c, 11/9/16)

Dean Hackert first turned to the national news and the Executive Order (EO), “Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorists Entry Into the United States.” The EO has caused a lot of furor in the US and abroad. Several academic organizations have made strong statements condemning the order. The Dean asked Shannon Neuse to report on the impact of the EO on applications to UT.

As of 31 January 2017, Shannon reported that for summer and fall of 2017, we currently have 26,254 applications, down 700 from this time last year. The largest change is in Engineering. We’re down 591 applications, about 9%. Liberal Arts has seen an 8% drop (270 applications). Natural Sciences is up 319 applications (about 8%) and Business is up 200 applications (4%). There has been a 3% reduction in applications from China but a 3% increase from India as well as a reduction of about 100 applications from South Korea. Dean Neikirk added that there was a 34% decrease in applications from the UK, 30% from Canada, and 17% from Mexico.

The Dean then turned to Governor Abbott’s order freezing new hires in the state. The university is still exploring the implications of the order and has no news to report there. In addition, the dean mentioned that there were many bills being filed about tuition but that it was too early to comment on any of them.

The Dean announced that there are two new sources of money to support graduate students. The first one this year is the ConTex program that allows students from Mexico to get five years of funding that comes from four years funded by Mexico CONACYT in Mexico and one year from the UT system.

The second comes from the Provost who collected unused balances which has led to $13 million of additional fellowship funding across campus. Most of the funds will be used as four and five-thousand-dollar top-offs to existing fellowships but with no restrictions (these can be used with a TA appointment). This is an experiment to see if higher offers will actually yield a better incoming class.
The Dean concluded with information about the Three Minute Thesis competition and that the hard copy of the signature page will be eliminated sometime this semester. (D&P 3227c-3227d, 2/1/17)

*Dean Neikirk reporting on behalf of Marvin Hackert:*

The search for the new Graduate Dean continues but the Graduate School staff does not have an update.

The ConTex program is a joint program with CONACYT in Mexico. There are about 70 students currently being considered, 40 are new PhD applicants and 30 are current students from Mexico with half of the applicants having applied to or are from UT Austin. The potential problem is that CONACYT does the final review and approval for funding in July. This is too late really for recruiting new students and for students to get visas, and so on. The hope is that they will speed up their process.

Dean Neikirk introduced Shannon Neuse with an update on admission. Shannon Neuse reported that we have received 27,372 applications for summer and fall of 2017. We are down 2.6% this year compared to this time last year (a total of 718 applications total). She followed up with specific details about different schools and programs. The reduction seems evenly split between domestic and foreign applications. To date we’ve admitted 4,971 applications and we’re still pending decision on 14,751. (D&P 3228f, 3/22/17)

Dean Hackert began by announcing that UT has a new dean for the graduate school. Mark Smith, who is an electrical and computer engineer, trained at MIT and Georgia Tech, and most recently the graduate dean at Purdue University.

UT hosted the Big 12 Graduate Deans in April 2017. There was much discussion of challenges universities have in common, including how best to support students. Dean Hackert also mentioned the Rand Report, available on the Graduate School web page. They compared Texas to New York, California, and Florida, similarly populous states, and found the state is behind in the number of advanced degrees it grants compared to all those states.

Dean Hackert took some questions about the report and issues facing the Graduate School in the next few years. He then introduced Shannon Neuse who reviewed the specifics of admission. She reported that there had been some shifts in admission patterns since the previous year but the numbers were still in flux.

Before the committee adjourned Dean Hackert invited the Assembly to a reception and thanked Chair Konana for his service. (D&P 3230a-3230 c, 4/25/17)
V. Report from the Chair (Prabhudev Konana)

The Chair had no report. (D&P 3224b, 9/21/16)

The Chair had no report. (D&P 3226c, 11/9/16)

The chair had no formal report but did compliment the Graduate School on the speed of their new degree approval process. (D&P 3227d, 2/1/17)

The Chair had no report. (D&P 3228f, 3/22/17)

Prior to the start of the meeting Chair Konana introduced the newly elected members of the Graduate Assembly.

Secretary Charlotte Canning had to step down in the middle of her term and nominated Karen Rascati from the College of Pharmacy was unanimously nominated to fill her term.

Chair Konana welcomed incoming chair Hal Alper and urged every faculty member to serve on Graduate Assembly at some point. He pointed out that graduate education is facing many challenges, especially funding, and urged the Assembly to be proactive in the future. He also thanked the people in the Graduate School for their excellent work. (D&P 3230a, 4/26/17)

VI. Standing Committee Reports

A. Academic Committee (Hal Alper)

Hal Alper introduced the proposal to update the degree title for the master’s degree program in Nutritional Sciences from Master of Arts (MA) to Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences (MSNS).

Molly Bray, chair of Department of Nutritional Sciences, was introduced and spoke on behalf of the proposal. The curriculum is very science based, especially in biochemistry and metabolism, and chemistry and comparable programs that offer Master’s degrees in Nutrition generally offer Master’s of Science. The existing program will be phased out when the catalog expires. The proposal to update the degree title was approved unanimously. (D&P 3224b, 9/21/16)

Hal Alper reported that the Academic Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposal to add an Option III track to the existing Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences (MSNS) degree program. Molly Bray, the Chair of the Department in Nutritional Sciences, introduced the proposal, noting that master’s level training will be required for all Registered Dieticians by 2024.
She noted that 29 existing programs in US currently provide this training. Other audiences for the online program might include clinical professionals and medical professionals. The online program is designed to maintain the same rigor found in the existing residential program. Admissions standards for the online program will be same as the residential program, and the curriculum content will be very similar.

Hal Alper noted that the program has been designed with the assumption that most students will complete a coursework-based master’s but that there is an option to complete a thesis for those who are interested.

Karen Rascati asked if students would come to campus to meet each other or if the program would be delivered completely online. Molly Bray confirmed that, initially, the program will be offered completely online. In the future, they may develop some in-residence training opportunities.

Prabhudev Konana asked how the cost of course development – which can range from $30,000 to $300,000 per course – is being covered. Specifically, he asked how much UT System is contributing in this area. Molly Bray explained that the department is working with the Institute for Transformational Learning (ITL), a UT System-level entity that develops innovative online education. She explained that ITL will provide a grant for course development and that cost recovery for the grant occurs in the operating part of program.

Dr. Bray further noted that ITL is currently developing an MOU with UT Austin and that Nutritional Sciences will be the first UT Austin program to work with them. ITL has provided a lot of guidance in the development of an online agreement. For example, UT Austin will maintain ownership of the course content, a detail that ITL acknowledges is important on our campus.

Molly Bray discussed the department’s goals with respect to use of revenue from the option III program, noting that those funds will be reinvested into the existing graduate program where it will create a stable resource for graduate student support and new faculty recruitment.

Prabhudev Konana requested clarification on the timeline for implementation, noting the time needed for online course development. Molly Bray explained that the option III program would initially be offered as a two-year program so the department will be able to prioritize the development of courses over time.

At the end of two years, they may be in a position to develop fast-track courses that will allow students to complete the program in one year, rather than two.

The proposal to add an Option III track to the existing Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences degree program was unanimously approved by the Graduate Assembly and deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3226d, 11/9/16)
The Academic Committee chair opened by introducing the guests who spoke to the proposal to create a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Mexican American and Latina/o Studies (MALS). They were Dr. Richard Flores, MALS department chair; Dr. Karma Chavez, Associate Professor and Graduate Advisor; Katy Buchanan, Administrative Manager; and Natasha Saldaña, Graduate Coordinator.

Dr. Flores described the core of the program as an interdisciplinary approach created through courses in the department and other departments with a core field/discipline. The core of the program examines the social and historical and contemporary experience of Latinos in the US. There were a few questions but they were all points of clarification. Both James Cox, English, and Charlotte Canning, Theatre and Dance, made statements in favor of the new PhD. The Proposal to create a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Mexican American and Latina/o Studies (MALS) was approved unanimously.

The report on proposals to add room-share arrangements to the Option III programs in Finance and Marketing is pending. Dr. Alper reported that the committee had unanimously approved this proposal. Maria Juenger, Civil Engineering, pointed out that there was precedent in other departments for this arrangement.

The proposal to create a dual-degree program in Medicine/Business Administration is pending.

The proposal to create a dual-degree program in Medicine/Public Health with the UT Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health (Austin Regional Campus) is pending. (D&P 3227d, 2/1/17)

The proposal to create an inter-institutional dual-degree arrangement leading to the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree from the UT Austin Dell Medical School and the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from the UT Health Science Center at Houston (Austin Campus) was discussed. The proposal came to the Assembly with the unanimous approval of the Academic Committee. Guests Sue Cox, Executive Vice Dean of the Dell Medical School and Bill Kohl, Associate Regional Dean for Academic Affairs in the School of Public Health at the UT Health Science Center at Houston, provided context for the proposal and answered questions from the Assembly. The proposal passed unanimously.

The proposal to update the name of the department and degree major from “Educational Administration” to “Educational Leadership and Policy” came to the Assembly with the unanimous approval of the Academic Committee. Victor Saenz, Associate Professor and incoming Department Chair, provided context for the proposal and answered questions from the Assembly. This change was initiated to keep the name of the department and degree major current with both the field and the coursework. The proposal passed unanimously.
The proposal to add an option III (self-funded) track to the existing Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree in Kinesiology, concentration in Sport Management was discussed. This proposal came to the Assembly with the unanimous approval of the Academic Committee. This self-funded program will create an online degree option for working professionals in the sports and recreation industry who want to move into a leadership role in sports management.

This online degree option will provide the content expertise that is increasingly necessary for advancement in the field. Emily Sparvero, Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Education, provided context for the proposal and answered questions from the Assembly. The proposal passed unanimously.

The proposal to establish a credit-hour equivalency policy for the Dell Medical School Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree program came to the Assembly with the unanimous approval of the Academic Committee. The proposal was initiated in response to a SACS and federal accreditation requirement. The policy outlined in the proposal satisfies that requirement. Sue Cox, Executive Vice Dean for Academics at Dell Medical School, provided context for the proposal. The proposal passed unanimously. (D&P 3228e.1-3228e.2, 3/22/17)

Ciaran Trace reporting on behalf of Hal Alper:
The proposal to create a graduate certificate in Latin American Architecture was introduced. Cisco Gomez, associate professor and interim associate dean for graduate programs, and Robin Dusek, the graduate coordinator, spoke on behalf on the proposal. There were few questions asked and they were informational in nature. The proposal passed unanimously.

The proposal to create an Option III (self-funded) Master of Science in Information Technology and Management (MSITM)degree program was discussed. Huseyin Tanriverdi, associate professor, Department of IROM; Steve Gilbert, chair of the Department of IROM, and Karen Connolly, lecturer, Department of IROM spoke on behalf on the proposal. There were no questions. The proposal passed unanimously.

Proposal to create a dual-degree program in Medicine/Business Administration was introduced. Sue Cox, executive vice dean of academics from the Dell Medical School; Steven Lindbergh, associate dean for graduate programs from McCombs School of Business; and Annemarie Corey from the Dell Medical School spoke on behalf on the proposal. There was one information-based question. The proposal passed unanimously.

Proposal to create a dual-degree program in Medicine/Educational Psychology was introduced. Marilla Svinicki, Department of Educational Psychology, and Sue Cox provided information about the need for the 3231n
degree. Cindy Carlson, chair, Department of Educational Psychology; Burless Vinicki, professor emeritus from the Department of Educational Psychology; Diane Schallert, professor, Department of Educational Psychology; and Annemarie Corey from the Dell Medical School; provided information about the need for the degree and excellent placement opportunities. The only question from the Assembly was logistical in nature. The proposal passed unanimously.

The committee is currently reviewing the reports on Option III Annual Progress submitted to date and there will be a report on the progress of these degrees in Fall 2017. (D&P 3229a-3229b, 4/26/17)

B. Administrative Committee (James Cox)

James Cox reported that the Administrative Committee had reviewed several procedural, non-legislative issues at the request of the Graduate Dean. First, the committee discussed the policy which currently allows students to make their oral defenses private without requiring any further consultation. This selection is made by the student on the Request for Final Oral, also known as the ‘pink form.’ The committee unanimously agreed that this procedure should be changed so that students who want to hold private defenses are required to consult with their committee members or their graduate advisor. James Cox, further noted, that the committee generally agreed that oral defenses should be public.

Dr. Cox reported that the Administrative Committee discussed moving the deadline for updating grade status to or from CR/NC and that the consensus opinion among the committee was to move the deadline to the last class day of the semester.

Dr. Cox reported that the Administrative Committee had considered the Graduate School’s practice of enforcing, without exception, a restriction on employing graduate students as TA’s or GRA’s if they have two or more temporary incompletes. The committee has recommended that the policy be maintained, but that the Graduate Dean be granted the flexibility to grant exceptions when petitions are submitted to the Graduate School.

Dr. Cox concluded his report stating the Administrative Committee had reviewed current grading policies for dissertation coursework and would be recommending that a grade of CR/NC be assigned to each semester of dissertation coursework in order to better indicate a student’s progress or lack of progress through a program. Currently, an ‘*’ (asterisk) is assigned to indicate ‘in progress.’ Dr. Cox reported that, while the committee had reached a consensus opinion, a single objection had been made by John Deigh from the Law School. (D&P 3224b-3224c, 9/21/16)
James Cox reported that the proposal to change the grading symbol for theses, reports, dissertation, treatise, and recital courses from "*" (asterisk) to CR/NC had been reviewed at the request of the Graduate Dean and the proposal had been unanimously approved by the committee. This was deemed minor legislation.

Diane Schallert asked when the new grading policy would go into effect. Dean Neikirk responded that there was no related programming to do and that this is not a catalog issue. He stated that it's too late to implement this fall and is, therefore, more likely to go into effect in spring 2017.

Maria Juenger asked if the "*" would continue to be offered as a grading option, noting that this would likely lead to confusion. Dean Neikirk noted that the "*" would still continue to be a valid symbol for other courses.

Michelle Broadway stated that grading options for these courses could likely be restricted to CR/NC without requiring programming from the Registrar.

Allison Frasier stated that she had served on the Administrative Committee and noted that the committee had discussed what it means for students to earn a lot of NC's and the importance of having an option to request a change in a previously assigned "NC" based upon the instructor having received information that was not available at the time of grade reporting.

Marvin Hackert noted that there have been increasing discussions about clarifying the process for terminating students. James Cox stated that there had been one objection on the committee from John Deigh who was concerned that the sole reason for the proposed change in grade status was to make it easier to terminate a student.

Karen Rascati asked how this information would be distributed to students and faculty. Dean Hackert responded that we would likely start with the Graduate Coordinator Network (GCN).

James Cox reported that the committee unanimously agreed the deadline for changing the status in a course from letter grad to CR/NC and vice versa should be changed to a date close to the end of the semester. This is not a catalog issue and does not require Assembly legislation.

He reported that the committee found the November 1 deadline to be arbitrary. Graduate Coordinators who were asked support this change. They hope it will reduce anxiety and confusion for students.

Diane Schallert asked for clarification on the proposed deadline. Jim Cox noted that it may change from one semester to the next but that it will be as late as they can make it before the grade sheets come out.
Dean Neikirk noted that we can likely extend the deadline to the Monday of the last full week of classes. After that time, the staff in the Graduate School are working on final submissions. He confirmed that although the earlier deadline is in effect this fall, he will accept petitions for later updates.

Kate Weaver expressed surprise and concern that a more specific date or timeline had not been defined. She asked if it would be specifically defined and published for students. Dean Neikirk confirmed that the deadline would be published in the academic calendar each year.

David Harrison asked how many late requests are processed each semester. Dean Neikirk responded that the number was in the hundreds.

David Harrison noted that there’s a trade-off; namely, if we move the deadline to a later date, there’s a greater degree of unpredictability in all requests. It also means students are doing much less planning than they are end-of-semester cleanup, and the program faculty and staff have to process a larger volume in a shorter period of time. Dean Neikirk responded that there is nothing to prevent a program from establishing an earlier deadline and that we are trying to provide flexibility.

Graduate student representative Mostafa noted that there’s a limit on the number of CR/NC courses that a graduate student can count towards their degree. Karen Rascati confirmed that the College of Pharmacy sets their own limits on CR/NC coursework.

Jim Cox noted that the committee had discussed whether students would “game the system” and had decided it wasn’t a major concern because the faculty member can still assign a grade.

John Hassenbein confirmed that the Graduate School has a restriction of no more than 20% of CR/NC coursework counted towards the degree.

David Harrison noted that the benefit is flexibility to the student; the cost is the lack of predictability of flow and lack of time to process for the faculty and staff.

Dean Neikirk noted that there are usually only a handful of late requests per program in a given semester, but that this quantity across graduate programs adds up.

Alison Frasier noted that the committee discussion started from observing that a previous dean had a moral position on students making late requests in order to “game the system.” The Administrative Committee didn’t feel as compelled by this moral claim.
Prabhudev Konana asked if the dynamic of group projects had been discussed by the committee. Jim Cox responded that this issue had not been discussed but noted that the conversation stops with the faculty member who can say no.

Prabhudev Konana noted that this issue was being brought before the Assembly in the form of a report and confirmed that a vote was not required. (D&P 3226b-3226g, 11/9/16)

The Administrative Committee is currently discussing the dissertation embargo policy. They are also looking at the 14-semester rule. The work is in process, and they have nothing to report at this time. (D&P 3228e.2, 3/22/17)

The committee is not ready to issue a formal report on the 14-semester rule but will advise next year's committee to eliminate it. A record of their deliberations will be given to next year's committee. They will also recommend that next year's committee will look into implementing a rule requiring the annual review of all graduate students.

The committee also discussed the dissertation embargo policy and will pass along their findings to next year's committee. (D&P 3230b, 4/26/17)

C. Admission and Enrollment Committee (Diane Schallert)

Committee Chair Diane Schallert reported that the Admissions and Enrollment committee was recommending approval of the proposal to waive the requirement for the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) for applicants to the integrated master's program in Accounting. She noted that applicants to the integrated program are students who are familiar to the faculty at UT Austin and, also, that other integrated-degree programs at UT Austin allow for similar waivers of admissions test scores. The proposal to waive the GMAT test-score requirement was approved unanimously. (D&P 3224c, 9/21/16)

Chair Schallert reported that the proposal to waive GRE/GMAT requirement for applicants to dual-degree programs to be administered by the Dell Medical School was unanimously approved by the Admissions and Enrollment Committee.

Kate Weaver asked if the request for waiver would apply to all dual-degree arrangements with the Dell Medical School. Diane Schallert responded that a program could choose to require the GRE, but that the precedent established through this legislation might complicate matters. Dean Hackert explained that we are expecting several dual-degree proposals and that Dell Medical School is seeking a blanket waiver for those programs.
Hal Alper asked if a dual-degree program wanted to have a GRE requirement if they choose. He pointed out that the current motion says "all programs" and suggested that a friendly amendment to the motion might alleviate this concern.

Members of the Assembly discussed the friendly amendment, noting that the legislated waiver of admissions test scores would apply to all medical students in dual-degree programs that themselves have asked for a waiver. Members of the Assembly noted the need to confirm Dell Medical School's agreement with the revised motion.

The Proposal to waive the GRE/GMAT requirement for all medical students participating in dual-degree programs that have sought a waiver of the GRE/GMAT was unanimously approved by the Assembly, and it was deemed minor legislation. (D&P 3226g-3226h, 11/9/16)

Diane Schallert had no formal report but did say that the committee was looking at the use of GREs for admission. (D&P 3227e, 2/1/17)

There was no report from Admissions and Enrollment Committee (D&P 3228e.2, 3/22/17)

Karen Rascati reporting on behalf of Diane Schallert:
The proposal to waive the GRE/GMAT requirement for UT Austin undergraduate applicants to the Master of Science in Information Technology and Management (MSITM) degree program was introduced. Steve Gilbert spoke on behalf of the proposal. He was asked how they identify students and what the national norms are. The proposal passed unanimously. (D&P 3230b-3230c, 4/26/17)

VII. Graduate Student Assembly (Wills Brown)

There was no report for the Graduate Student Assembly. (D&P 3224c, 9/21/16)

Kareem Mostafa attending on behalf of Wills Brown. No report to be shared. (D&P 3226h, 11/9/16)

Wills Brown reported that the current administration is trying to make GSA a beacon of professional development workshopping and a social networking for Graduate Students.
He listed several events: in September a welcome to UT, in October an Academics theme with events in the PCL, in November a mental health theme with cookies and coffee with Dr. Brownson the Director of the Counseling and Health Center (CMHC) on campus. In addition, the GSA has a new logo.

The GSA has also created an undergraduate mentorship agency which strengthens the relationship between undergraduates and graduate students.

There will be a graduate student prom at the end of February featuring a 90s cover band. The focus in March will be on diversity on this campus and in April a focus on health and wellness will tie into the Longhorn run on campus.

The GSA is part of the Invest in Texas group, which includes the Student Government Senate and the Graduate Student Assembly. They will be advocating to the Legislature on behalf of students about affordability and student health/wellness.

Charlotte Canning, Theatre and Dance, asked how events and services would be promoted and if faculty can be on the mailing list. Wills Brown provided the GSA’s URL and said he would provide information later about the list serve. (D&P 3227e, 2/1/17)

There was no report from the Graduate Student Assembly. (D&P 3228e.2, 3/22/17)

Wills Brown updated the Assembly on the various initiatives of the GSA. (D&P 3230c, 4/26/17)